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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 001453

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [MNUC](#) [MASS](#) [KN](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: U/S BOLTON'S VISIT TO YEMEN: MEETING WITH
PRESIDENTIAL ATOMIC ENERGY ADVISOR

Classified By: Charge Alan G. Misenheimer for Reasons 1.5 (b,d)

1. (S/NF) Begin summary: On June 17, Under Secretary John Bolton met with Dr. Moustafa Bahran, Chairman of the Yemeni National Atomic Energy Commission (NATEC) and science advisor to ROYG President Saleh. Discussing the U.S. campaign to target and cut off revenue that funds North Korea's nuclear program, Bahran advised concentrating on the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and suggested the U.S. keep Yemen's development needs in mind. Bahran outlined his work with the IAEA to secure nuclear materials and radioactive sources, proposed a joint Yemen-U.S.-UK-France resolution on the security of radioactive sources, and suggested a regional initiative to strengthen nuclear and radioactive controls. End summary.

Yemen-DPRK Cooperation

2. (S/NF) During a working breakfast on June 17, U/S Bolton and the Chairman of Yemen's National Atomic Energy Commission Dr. Moustafa Bahran discussed several issues, including Yemen's relationship with the DPRK. Bolton noted that, while the U.S. is pursuing a diplomatic solution, it is also working to undermine the DPRK's nuclear program by stopping weapons sales and other transactions that provide funding. Transit and purchasing countries, especially those in the Middle East, must say "No" to the DPRK. He called Yemen the most important stop on his tour because of its known DPRK SCUD missile purchases, highlighted by the December 2002 interception of the So San cargo vessel. The time has come for ROYG to join the international community in denouncing North Korea's unacceptable behavior.

3. (S/NF) Bahran said that Yemen-DPRK cooperation is purely a question of cost. The U.S. must convince the Ministry of Defense (MOD), not the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), of the importance of this issue. The MOD would have no problem working with the U.S. if convinced the U.S. offered affordable, realistic alternatives. However, Bahran cautioned, if the price difference is too high, MOD will object.

4. (S/NF) U/S Bolton suggested that the positive political gains of ending cooperation with the DPRK should also be calculated into the "final price". The cooperation that led to resolution of the So San incident is only one example of the larger U.S.-Yemen partnership that the ROYG should take into consideration. Bahran advised that if the USG shows consideration for Yemen's critical development needs, the DPRK problem would end.

5. (S/NF) U/S Bolton said that during a recent meeting of 11 countries in Madrid -- including Japan, a major donor to Yemen -- a decision was made to conduct more operations like the Spanish interdiction of the So San. In light of the growing threat posed by North Korea's weapons program, Bolton noted these countries are willing to accept the burden of interdiction costs.

Security of Nuclear Materials and Radioactive Sources

6. (C) Bahran noted that, in December 2000, Yemen was one of the first countries to raise the issue of protection and physical security of radioactive sources (PSRS). In 2002, Yemen co-drafted and co-sponsored IAEA resolution GC/46/Res/13. While the resolution is adequate, it does not do enough to address PSRS. Bahran then outlined his efforts to enlist support for the passage of a three-part resolution at September's IAEA General Conference covering illicit trafficking, nuclear materials, and radioactive sources. He met with the French Nuclear Commission in May, and plans to approach his counterparts in the U.S. and the UK later this summer to garner support for the resolution. U/S Bolton then offered to assist Bahran in scheduling a meeting with Secretary Abraham at the Department of Energy.

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Regional Initiative

17. (C) Bahran cited poor security in many Gulf states as the impetus for the formation of a regional authority to harmonize PSRS licensing and enforcement. By contributing to regional security, a ROYG-led initiative might also help Yemen's bid to join the Gulf Cooperation Council. Bahran said President Saleh would send him to talk to Gulf leaders, but ROYG would appreciate U.S. assistance to set the stage with the GCC. U/S Bolton agreed to carry Bahran's ideas back to Washington, but again suggested he raise these issues with Secretary Abraham directly.

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18. (C) Comment: Dr. Bahran obviously enjoyed his meeting with U/S Bolton, and asked the U/S when he was meeting with the President. At that point, no meeting had been requested or scheduled. Two hours later, President Saleh's office called to request an immediate meeting at the Presidential Palace (septel). It appears likely that Bahran was directly responsible, reflecting the close relations between President Saleh and his science advisors.

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